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HOUSE MEMORIAL 74

49TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2009

INTRODUCED BY

William "Bill" R. Rehm

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT TO COLLABORATE WITH THE NEW MEXICO ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES AND THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO HOSPITAL TO STUDY THE FUNDING OF INDIGENT CARE AT THE HOSPITAL.

WHEREAS, the university of New Mexico health sciences center has policies that ensure that indigent patients have access to resources to cover the cost of their care at the university of New Mexico hospital, regardless of their place of residence; and

WHEREAS, the total cost of uncompensated care at the hospital rose from more than one hundred thirty-seven million dollars (\$137,000,000) in fiscal year 2006 to more than one hundred sixty-one million dollars (\$161,000,000) in fiscal year 2008; and

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1 WHEREAS, in 2008, according to the higher education
2 department, more than fourteen million dollars (\$14,000,000)
3 worth of uncompensated care at the hospital was provided to
4 patients residing outside of Bernalillo county; and

5 WHEREAS, revenues to offset the cost of uncompensated care
6 at the university of New Mexico hospital come from a variety of
7 sources, including a Bernalillo county hospital mill levy, the
8 county-supported medicaid fund, indigent funds funded by gross
9 receipts taxes, appropriated out-of-county indigent funding and
10 charity, but these combined revenues are insufficient to cover
11 the costs of uncompensated care; and

12 WHEREAS, property taxes in the form of a mill levy from
13 the residents of Bernalillo county funded an estimated eighty-
14 three million eight hundred thousand dollars (\$83,800,000) in
15 uncompensated care in fiscal year 2008, comprising more than
16 twenty percent of the total property tax collected; and

17 WHEREAS, the New Mexico health policy commission has
18 acknowledged, and the New Mexico association of counties
19 agrees, that residents of Bernalillo county effectively
20 subsidize care for indigent patients from other counties
21 throughout the state; and

22 WHEREAS, more than twenty percent of the Bernalillo county
23 hospital mill levy is spent on indigent care for out-of-county
24 residents; and

25 WHEREAS, according to the Kaiser family foundation,

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1 twenty-three percent of New Mexico residents are uninsured,
2 compared to a national rate of fifteen percent uninsured; and

3 WHEREAS, as the economic condition of the state and the
4 nation continues to deteriorate, the number of people who are
5 uninsured will predictably rise; and

6 WHEREAS, the burden on residents of Bernalillo county and
7 the rest of the state of uncompensated care can likewise be
8 predicted to increase, given historical experience and the
9 current economic downturn; and

10 WHEREAS, the Bernalillo county hospital mill levy is not
11 eligible for federal medicaid matching funds; and

12 WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the state to ensure
13 access to needed hospital services for all residents of the
14 state;

15 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
16 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the human
17 services department be requested to collaborate with the New
18 Mexico association of counties and the university of New Mexico
19 hospital to study the funding of indigent care at the
20 university of New Mexico hospital; and

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study explore alternative
22 funding mechanisms, including the potential for obtaining
23 federal medicaid matching funds, that will reduce the burden on
24 Bernalillo county taxpayers while retaining access to services
25 at the university of New Mexico hospital for all New Mexico

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1 residents; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the human services department
3 consult with the higher education department, the university of
4 New Mexico health sciences center and others, as appropriate,
5 in conducting the study; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a written report of the
7 findings and recommendations of the study be presented to the
8 interim legislative health and human services committee and the
9 legislative finance committee by October 1, 2009; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
11 transmitted to the human services department, the New Mexico
12 association of counties and the university of New Mexico
13 hospital.

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